

Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT

MISSIONARY

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

ORGANIZED 1786

VOL. 16, NO. 8
MAY, 1985

"Preaching The Same Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

NEGLECTING THE GREAT SALVATION

By DR. C. D. COLE

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward: How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" Hebrews 2:1-4.

Our text is an exhortation to listen to and act upon the Gospel message. The Gospel is good news about a great salvation that has been prepared for sinners, and if we fail to hear and heed the message there is no way of escape from the fearful consequences of sin. The first verse of our Scripture has been variously translated. One version renders the last clause like this: "lest haply we drift away from them." Another version makes

it read, "lest they should run away from us as water from a leaking vessel." But whatever the translation and interpretation the thought is the same: it is a warning against failing to hear and heed the plan of salvation as given in the Word of God.

The process of salvation from the human side is thru repentance and faith, and this involves hearing and giving attention to the Gospel. As long as men hear the Gospel and it goes in at one ear and out at the other they will never be saved.

I like the translation which reads, "lest we drift away from them." Most people are drifting into hell. Drifting is an unconscious process. You can be in a boat, resting on your oars and you seem to be standing still, but when you look back and see the place you were a while before, you realize that you have been drifting. Some men appear to be on an ocean liner with full steam rushing towards destruction, but the majority are just drifting. The murderer, the drunkard, the gambler, and the atheist are streamlining towards eternal ruin, but

most men are unconsciously drifting in that direction.

A man was once in a boat on the Niagara river at a good and safe distance from the falls. He got tired and lay his oars in the bottom of the boat and took it easy. He sat there with folded arms and after a while fell asleep. The men on the shore saw his danger and cried to him that he was nearing the falls. But he did not move --he was unconsciously drifting--he had no real sense of his danger. The men ran down the bank shouting that the falls were ahead, but he did not hear them. He sat there unmoved and the mighty current of Niagra swept him over the falls to instant and certain death. Neglect cost him his life. He did not lose his life by anything he did; he lost it by neglect--he drifted to death.

Hell or eternal punishment is the price of neglect. Men do not have to murder or steal or drink or gamble to be lost. These crimes may add to the miseries of hell, but men who have never done any of these things are sin-

ners, nevertheless, and need salvation.

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Why is Salvation Neglected?

If salvation is deliverance from sin; if it means escape from the eternal burnings; if it means to be brought into the favor of God; if it means eternal happiness and glory; why do men neglect it? If salvation is so expensive that nothing but the blood of the eternal Son of God would suffice as payment of it; why is it neglected by so many people? If salvation may be had without money or without price; if it is by grace through faith and not of works; if it is the gift of God; Why, I ask again, is it neglected as it is? Now, there are scriptural answers to all these questions, and the only answer to any of them is to be found in the Bible. Is salvation neglected because men do not have any interest in themselves? Is it because the sinner does not love himself? No, this cannot be for the lost man loves himself as much as the saved man loves himself.

The true answer to the question, "Why is salvation neglected" is to be found in the condition of the mind and heart of man by nature. If the scriptures are to be believed, the carnal mind is enmity against God, and the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. According to the Bible, sin has ruined the judgement and affection of the natural

man. The Bible says that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. Paul said that if his gospel was hid it was hid to the lost whose minds have been blinded by the god of this world. Sin has so twisted and warped human nature that human desires are in inverse ratio to human needs. Things of great value are ignored and neglected while things of small value, yea, things actually harmful, are sought after with consuming passion. Contrast the speed and enthusiasm with their utter indifference toward things of eternal value. Contrast the desire of the drunkard for liquor with his unconcern for salvation. What a sad commentary on human nature that men must be exhorted not to neglect salvation.

Moreover, a man may be interested in salvation and yet be blind or ignorant of the way of salvation. And he may be a college professor and yet be ignorant of how to become righteous before God. Paul, writing about his brethren in the flesh, said of them: "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Paul said they were interested in being right or righteous before God, but they did not know the true way to become righteous; they did not know that God had provided righteousness for the unrighteous; they thought they had to establish or prepare their own righteousness. And this they were trying to do. They were trying to become righteous by their own

obedience. They did not know that it was by the obedience of one, even Jesus Christ, that many shall be made righteous. They did not know the truth that "Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. They could not see that Christ is made unto sinners, that is believing sinners, wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.



One of the saddest pictures in the Bible is that given by Isaiah of the idolator. He describes how the heathen's god is made a man, plants a tree and the rain causes it to grow. He then cuts the tree down and from a portion of it he makes a fire to warm himself by; with another portion he makes a fire to cook his food with; and with the rest of the tree he makes his god and falls down before it and worships it. Then the prophet explains this strange procedure by saying, "A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?" Isaiah 44:20. That piece of wood the idolator held in his right hand was a false god; it was a lie, but the worshipper did not know it. What strange things men of the world look to and depend upon for acceptance with God!

May the light-giving Spirit show men and women that God is no respecter of persons; that he accepteth no man's person; that no man is accepted of God out of regard for what he is or does; that sinners are accepted in the beloved; and that God saves sinner's for Jesus sake. The only name in which men can be saved is the name sinner; and the only name by which we can be saved is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot find acceptance with God because we are white men or black men or yellow men or ignorant men; every man must come as a sinner.

MAKE TODAY COUNT

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Psalm 90:12

Today is not a day to be endured just in order to get over yonder to something better. The grass looks greener in the next pasture, but it is hard to tell which is our most important day. One day has one kind of opportunity, another has another. Let us buy up all the opportunities, for the days are evil.

We are apt to put a red circle around the wrong day. God's calendar does not look like ours. The big day on ours may be without special

significance on His. And the ordinary day, when "nothing much happened," may, if re-deemed to His glory, be a great day in His sight.

Do not try to evaluate any day, just make the most of it. What seems a dry and tedious interval, a desert stretch between here and yonder, while you burn with a fever to be into the middle of next week, may afford greater opportunity to know God and glorify Him than the glamorous day you are burning to reach.

Besides, this is the only day you can be sure of. "Boast not thyself of tomorrow." And today is the only day of its kind. God never makes two alike, There will never be another day like it. You may call it "just another day," but it isn't. Make it count for God!

Vance Havner

A BLESSING FOR SERVICE

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Ecclesiastes 9:10a.

Which of us cannot remember the times our mother questioned us about a chore we were to have done? Guiltily we insisted that we did

do what was asked of us, knowing in our heart that Mother was not happy about the results. After a reprimand and a "new" commission, we trudged back to the job again--because it had not been done right the first time. As we inspected our first attempt, it was evident that the ring in the bathtub was still there, or the grass along the sidewalk did miss the mower blades. The problem was not lack of instruction, however, but lack of wholeheartedness in doing our duty.

Doesn't this problem daily plague us? Halfhearted efforts produce poor grades, inferior work, low-quality products, dissatisfied employers, and discouraged employees. We can change this simply by doing our tasks joyfully and zealously, no matter how insignificant or routine they may seem. If we remember that we serve the Lord Jesus Christ in everything, how much harder and more consistently will we work! The pleasure will not only be the Lord's, but ours as well: "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" Proverbs 13:19. Let each of us be zealous in the work God has given us to do. Give 100%--100% of the time.

T. Lewis

WHERE DO YOU FIT IN? A national survey in the U.S. revealed the following about church members.

- 10% cannot be found any where
- 20% never attend a service
- 25% admit they never pray
- 35% admit they never read God's Word.
- 40% never give to the church
- 70% never attend the Sunday evening services.
- 75% never assume any responsibility in their church.
- 95% never win a soul to Christ
- BUT 100% EXPECT TO GO TO HEAVEN.